



# Southeast Fishery Bulletin

National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 9721 Executive Center Drive N., St. Petersburg, FL 33702

## FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:

Robert.Sadler@noaa.gov  
(727) 570-5326; FAX (727) 570-5490  
<http://caldera.sero.nmfs.gov>

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

July 29, 2003  
NR03-031

## REMINDER OF SEPTEMBER 15, 2003, APPLICATION DEADLINE FOR MORATORIUM CHARTER VESSEL OR HEADBOAT PERMITS FOR THE REEF FISH FISHERY AND COASTAL MIGRATORY PELAGICS FISHERY IN GULF OF MEXICO FEDERAL WATERS

On June 27, 2003, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) published a final rule to reopen the application process for obtaining Gulf charter vessel/headboat permits under a 3-year moratorium. An applicant, who is qualified and who wants a Gulf moratorium charter vessel or headboat (for-hire) permits for the reef fish and coastal migratory pelagics fishery in the Gulf of Mexico must submit an application for such permits to the NOAA Fisheries' Permits Team, postmarked or hand-delivered not later than September 15, 2003. Applications are available from the Permits Team. No applications for additional Gulf charter vessel/headboat moratorium permits postmarked or hand-delivered after September 15, 2003, will be accepted. **Any person, who is eligible for moratorium permits and fails to submit an application by September 15, 2003, will lose their eligibility under the current final rule.** There are no exceptions to this deadline.

### Applicability:

Beginning November 13, 2003, moratorium permits will be required for all charter vessels and headboats fishing in the Gulf of Mexico. **All currently existing Gulf open-access for-hire permits (not issued under the moratorium) will become void and cannot be used starting on November 13, 2003.**

### Initial Eligibility:

Under the moratorium, initial eligibility for a Gulf charter vessel/headboat permit(s) is limited to the following:

(1) An owner of a vessel that had a valid Gulf charter vessel/headboat permit(s) for Gulf reef fish or coastal migratory pelagic fish on March 29, 2001, or held such permit during the preceding year or whose application for such permit had been received by NOAA Fisheries by March 29, 2001; (2) any person who can provide NOAA Fisheries with documentation verifying that, prior to March 29, 2001, he/she had a for-hire vessel under

construction and that the associated expenditures were at least \$5,000 as of that date; the owner must provide NOAA Fisheries with receipts for the required expenditures; (3) a historical captain, defined as a person who provides NOAA Fisheries with documentation verifying that (A) Prior to March 29, 2001, he/she was issued either a U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Operator of Uninspected Passenger Vessel license (commonly referred to as a 6-pack license) or a USCG Masters license; operated, as a captain, a federally permitted for-hire in the Gulf reef fish and/or coastal migratory pelagic fisheries; but does not have a fishery permit issued in their name or the name of a corporation in which he/she was a shareholder; and (B) At least 25 percent of his/her earned income was derived from for-hire fishing in one of the years 1997, 1998, 1999, or 2000.

If you currently have an open access charter permit for Gulf coastal migratory pelagics and you want to charter fish in the South Atlantic after November 13, 2003, **you must apply for and obtain a separate open access charter permit for the South Atlantic.**

Questions regarding permits should be directed to the NOAA Fisheries' Permits Team at **727-570-5326**.

This and other news releases are available on the SERO homepage at <http://caldera.sero.nmfs.gov>. To obtain considerable recorded information about our missions, services, and management measures, call our toll free public service line at 1-866-570-5301. If the information you need is not available on that line, you can leave us a message and we'll get back to you within one business day.

NOAA Fisheries is an agency of the Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.